

Present: Dwight Baker; Ray Day, Jr.; Dave Elliott; Holly Plackett, Vice-Chair; Anirudh Sahni; Joan Sells, Tina Shereen, Chair

Excused: Andy Bennett; Carla Saulter

Provisional Members: Miranda Leidich; Joan Michaels

Staff: Barbara de Michele, Community Relations Planner; Julia Greenlee, Operations Administrator

Shereen opened the meeting at 6:05 p.m. Under “good of the order,” Ray Day suggested that the TAC send a letter of commendation to Kevin Desmond for the smooth opening of the transit tunnel and Metro’s response to I-5 construction in August.

Fare Evasion Task Force

Greenlee gave a report on the activities of the Fare Evasion Task Force, which was assembled in 2006 and involved a wide cross-section of Metro employee groups. The task force researched best practices used by peer agencies to combat fare evasion in three areas: 1) enforcement; 2) collection of fare evasion data; and 3) operational changes that reduce fare evasion. [Note: Peer agencies are transit systems serving similar sized communities or markets throughout the United States.]

Greenlee said that Metro stacks up well when compared to peer agencies. It appears that we are the only transit agency that gathers systemic information about fare evasion. Metro estimates an annual fare evasion rate of 3% (higher or lower rates occur on specific routes). Although this is a relatively small percentage, some data suggests that overt fare evasion encourages other undesirable behaviors on the bus. Therefore, Metro would like to do as much as it can to reduce fare evasion.

In the past few years, Metro has increased the number of transit police and undercover police riding the Metro system. Metro experimented with cameras on the bus (not always reliable) and other electronic monitoring devices. Driver safety is of paramount concern, and Metro policy places driver safety above fare collection.

In the area of operational changes, Greenlee noted that the new SmartCard will make it easier to collect fares. Metro will experiment with an “honor system” on the new RapidRide routes scheduled to begin operating along five corridors in 2011. Agencies that have adopted “zero tolerance” for fare evasion have generally not succeeded at enforcing the policy.

TAC members asked several questions, and thanked Greenlee for taking the time to address the group. Greenlee suggested that a future presentation by Carol Cummins, head of the Metro transit police, could be a good follow-up presentation.



Presentations

Dave Elliott, Anirudh Sahni and Dwight Baker reported on the recent King County Council budget hearing held in Bellevue. During the hearing, Elliott presented the TAC letter supporting a Metro fare increase. Elliott and Sahni were the only two individuals to discuss the proposed fare increase; most of the 200 attendees supported other issues.

Tina Shereen and Miranda Leidich reported on the October Transit Advisory Board conference held in Lacey. The conference involved advisory committee members from around the state of Washington. Shereen and Leidich noted that various boards played a wide range of roles in agencies, many of which are much smaller than Metro. Some board members take a much more active role in their agencies than our TAC members do. Both noted that many advisory boards have budgets and that the members receive free bus passes in exchange for their volunteer work. De Michele noted that many of the agency staff members were concerned about lack of term limits and how to involve more people. In that regard, the TAC is in a good position. She also heard about a "bus friends" project that might be applicable to the TAC's work. Ideas from the conference will be addressed at the TAC retreat in January.

Trip Planner Website

Sahni reviewed problems he has found with the Metro Trip Planner website. Following discussion, the TAC requested that de Michele invite website staff to the next TAC meeting for a presentation.

Letter of Commendation

Day agreed to draft a letter of commendation for review by the TAC at its December meeting.

Committee Business

De Michele reported on the progress of the three RapidRide public outreach projects occurring on Pacific Highway South, the Eastside and West Seattle. Brochures and questionnaires have already been mailed to the Pacific Highway South community. Similar documents will be mailed in the other regions in January. The Eastside and West Seattle outreach efforts include community-based advisory panels.

Tina Shereen and Ray Day said they would attend the Regional Transit Committee meeting [Note: the meeting was cancelled.]

De Michele reported that a second nominee from District 9 (Councilmember Reagan Dunn) has come forward and will attend the next TAC meeting as an observer. This leaves two openings on the TAC.

Shereen adjourned the meeting at 8:20 p.m.